February 2013
Raising resilient children
A boom in Catholic school enrolments
Parent Seminar Series lift out
No tears, just fun on day one

The boom in Catholic education is continuing in 2013, with the opening of a new Catholic school at Epping North and an influx of Prep twins at two other Catholic schools.

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish Primary School has opened with 60 students, but such is the area’s growth, principal Geraldine Dalton said the school could have up to 500 enrolments within five years.

The mood was no less enthusiastic at St Jude’s School, Langwarrin, where four sets of twins enjoyed their first day at school. The twins are: Jordan and Ruby Gillies; William and Ryan Smyth; Alysha and Sophie Walker; and Tyler and Spencer Vargas.

Principal Michael Kerin said all the Preps had settled in well. “The Preps enjoyed their first day at school … they were happy to be here. They knew the school beforehand because there was an orientation day and some have brothers and sisters here already, which makes it easier.”

The St Margaret Mary’s school community in Brunswick North, which is celebrating its centenary in 2013, welcomed three sets of twins – Kristina Huang and Patrina Zheng, Ava and Lana Tommer and Dhiya Vasantha Kumer and Sanchit Vasantha Kumer.

Principal Danny Ryan said it was the largest Prep intake at the school for several years. “We have two Prep classes with 17 pupils each. It was a very smooth morning with no tears by parents or by children, which was great.’

He said the arrival at the school of a new graduate teacher had also made an immediate impact. ‘Cassandra, who started in Prep – Year 2, is fantastic. She’s brought a great enthusiasm and passion into the school,’ Mr Ryan said.

Another milestone was reached at Kolbe Catholic College, Greenvale Lakes, where, six years after it opened, the first Year 12 students will be taught in 2013.

More than 200,000 students are now being educated at a Victorian Catholic school and there are plans for a further 13 new schools in Melbourne’s growth corridors and near Geelong over the next ten years.

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Executive Director of Catholic Education, Stephen Elder, said Victorian Catholic schools now educate almost one in four Victorian students. He said St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Catholic Parish Primary School shows how Catholic education was well placed to cope with increased demand and provide education in Melbourne’s growth corridors.

‘The Epping North school is wonderful news for Catholic families in the area,’ said Mr Elder. ‘The new school year is always a time of hope and optimism with a new group of Preppies walking through the gates for the first time.’

TVend of story to page 43

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Views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Catholic Education Office Melbourne. The editor reserves the right to amend or reject any item submitted for publication.

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Cover Image Cassandra Fitzgerald, the new teacher graduate at St Margaret Mary’s School, Brunswick North, with Prep twins, Ava and Lana Tommer, Dhiya Vasantha Kumer and Sanchit Vasantha Kumer and Kristina Huang and Patrina Zhen. Story this page.

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A leading London girls’ school caused a stir last year when the head mistress said, ‘All my girls need to make mistakes and need to fail’. Wimbledon High School headmistress, Heather Hanbury, said she wanted to show the students that ‘it is completely acceptable and completely normal not to succeed at times in life’.

Wimbledon students had achieved some of the highest exam scores in recent years but for one week they were invited to focus on failure. Ms Hanbury said she had placed a great emphasis on developing resilience and robustness among the girls but ‘they need to learn how to fail well and how to get over it and cope with it’.

Sue Roffey, Adjunct Associate Professor at the School of Education, University of Western Sydney, said she understands the logic. ‘Children should experience failure, otherwise they won’t learn,’ Dr Roffey said. ‘Adversity happens to everyone and everyone needs to learn how to cope with negative things.’

‘When little kids fall over and scratch their knee, it’s not the end of the world. The injury will eventually heal. If children don’t experience adversity when things go wrong it will eventually hit them between the eyeballs. From failure comes resilience,’ said Dr Roffey.

‘It’s about growing happy children who are confident and well adjusted.’

Clinical psychologist Andrew Fuller said that developing a ‘positive mindset’ in young people from an early age was critical. ‘We all have setbacks and there are times when we all have to pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off and start again,’ said Mr Fuller. ‘If we don’t learn from our mistakes we are destined to repeat them.’

‘Parents can help their children by assisting them to analyse their mistakes. The bottom line is that mistakes are an essential part of learning. Parents can help their children to learn that when you make a mistake, all it means is that you haven’t learned yet how to get it right.’

Mr Fuller admits it can be difficult to maintain the enthusiasm when there are setbacks. ‘When you’ve missed out on the dance team, a drama role or a sports team, or failed a test at school, it can be demoralising,’ he said. ‘If a child thinks they didn’t do well at something because they lack intelligence, they will give it away. If they see they are on the pathway of improvement, they will persist.’

The bottom line is that mistakes are an essential part of learning. Parents can help their children to learn that when you make a mistake, all it means is that you haven’t learned yet how to get it right.

“Children should experience failure, otherwise they won’t learn. Adversity happens to everyone and everyone needs to learn how to cope with negative things.”
Helen Cahill, Associate Professor, Australian Youth Research Centre at The University of Melbourne, said when talking about failure and success “persistence” was the key word. “I think it’s useful for families to think of the word persistence. The path to success is only gained by trying many, many times,” said Associate Professor Cahill.

“When a toddler attempts to walk, they’re staggering and falling for months before they finally walk. The same can be said about tying shoe laces or riding a bike. There are repeated attempts and success comes through persistence.

“It doesn’t matter whether it’s with friendships, academia or sport, when a person looks back on their life they’ll realise it’s persistence that pays off.”

Professor Cahill said one strategy to achieve success was to set goals. “One tip would be to break up the overall goal into small steps. For example, if a person wants to make friends, rather than break into a large group at once and fail … smile at someone and start a friendship with that person,” she said.

Young people have a glamorised view of the world because of what they see on television. They see the TV kids with lots of friends, but it’s not always realistic and true to life – which can lead to disappointment.

Professor Cahill said the extended family, including grandparents, can assist with building confidence and resilience in children. “It’s important for parents to highlight to their children their experiences, including their successes and failures. It provides a sense of membership for the whole family … and a sense of pride in their own (children’s) identity.

‘Parents can also ask their child, “What is your plan or goal and how can I help?”’

Mr Fuller added that parents were a positive role model in an era when the media highlighted the negative.

“Young people today seem to lack positive role models. The media likes to dish up the wrong kind of role models, like poor behaviour from a well-known sportsman. The idea that you can partly shape your life on someone you admire is alien to children.

“But parents can talk to their children about people they admired as a child and the qualities that person possessed. Talk to them about the everyday heroes who have been an inspiration.”

Mr Fuller is one of the key presenters in the 2013 Parent Seminar Series organised by the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM). His topic is titled The Secrets of Happy, Creative, Confident and Competent Kids. His presentation (5 August and 14 October) will cover a range of issues, including how parents can best deal with their children’s anxieties, building self-esteem and dealing with set backs.

See the following pages for the full details on the 2013 Parent Seminar Series.
The Parent Seminar Series in 2013 offers many opportunities to hear from experts about many issues you may be facing, and to learn strategies and skills to support your parenting. It's an opportunity too to meet other parents, carers and guardians and share your experience and concerns.

**Presenters**

- **Michael Grose**, whose topic is *Raising Mighty Boys*, holds a Master of Educational Studies and is the author of eight books on parenting.
- **Psychologist Terese Sheedy** specialises in counseling, consultancy and training. Her presentation is titled *Girls Rule*.
- **Andrew Fuller** is a Clinical Psychologist who lectures in child, adolescent and family psychology. His presentation is titled *The Secrets of Happy, Creative, Confident and Competent Kids*.
- **Chris Daicos** began her life as a primary school teacher and now works as a training and development consultant with a focus on resilience. Her presentation is titled *Building Resilience in Children and Adolescents*.
- **Julie Davey**, whose topic is *A for Attitude to Positive Parenting*, is a former nurse and author of positive attitude resources for children.
- **Bill Jennings** has more than 20 years experience as a leader in schools. He will present two topics this year, *Daughters and Dads* and *How to Stay in Touch on the Adolescent Roller Coaster*.

These sessions are ideal for families, carers and guardians of students in Catholic primary and secondary schools. Registration is through your local school or through the new Series Coordinator, Doug Sandiford (see story on page 7) on 9267 0228, or dsandiford@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au.

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**Funding a key issue for Catholic parent body**

Former UK resident, Tracey O’Neill, is passionate about school funding in Australia. So much so, she decided to join the Victorian Catholic Schools Parent Body (VCSPB) last year to add her voice to the debate.

Ms O’Neill, who joined the VCSPB on the eve of the release of the Gonski Review of Funding for Schooling, has been appointed the new parent body chair for 2013.

After arriving from Britain in the mid-1990s, Ms O’Neill became committed to the issues around school funding and the amount of funding received by Catholic schools from the Victorian and Australian Governments. With two children in a Catholic school at Daylesford, Ms O’Neill said funding was close to her heart.

‘I was initially quite shocked at the funding differences between the UK and Australia,’ said Ms O’Neill. ‘Education for all school sectors was centrally funded in Britain and all schools received the same amount of money, no matter whether they were government or Catholic. [Victorian Catholic school students currently receive, on average, 20 per cent less government funding than students in government schools].

‘I was passionate that Catholic schools should be better funded and understood that with one voice people can be very effective and make a difference.’

Ms O’Neill wants to lift the focus of the VCSPB in 2013 and strengthen ties with all the dioceses.

‘I want to meet all the diocesan directors this year. I think it’s important to strengthen the links and build relationships with the dioceses. I think it’s also important to have a good relationship with the state and federal governments, in collaboration with the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria,’ Ms O’Neill said.

‘Another aim in 2013 is to lift the profile of the parent body, so Catholic parents know who we are and what we can do for them. I see our role primarily as an advocacy role … to speak to government on behalf of parents. We will be holding our meetings in regional Victoria during the year and will be encouraging local parent groups to attend those meetings so we know what’s on their mind.’

To boost the VCSPB’s profile, a new-look website was recently launched. It contains important information for parents, including school funding and resource details for strengthening family–school–community partnerships. For further details about the VCSPB go to vcspb.vic.catholic.edu.au.

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**Education for all school sectors was centrally funded in Britain and all schools received the same amount of money, no matter whether they were government or Catholic.**
RAISING MIGHTY BOYS
PRESENTER: Michael Grose
AGES: Primary and secondary

This seminar will provide a better understanding of the needs of boys to assist you in your parenting. You will get essential information, strategies and the reassurance to help you raise your mighty boys into mighty fine men.

DATE 21 May
TIME 7pm – 9pm
LOCATION St Mary’s School, Ascot Vale (Melways Map 28 F9)

DATE 23 May
TIME 7pm – 9pm
LOCATION St Monica’s School, Footscray (Melways Map 2S J8)

DATE 10 September
TIME 7pm – 9pm
LOCATION St Joseph’s School, Yarra Junction (Melways Map 288 E10)

DATE 12 September
TIME 7pm – 9pm
LOCATION St Cecilia’s School, Glen Iris (Melways Map 59 H8/60 A6)

GIRLS RULE
PRESENTER: Theresa Sheedy
AGES: Primary and Secondary

This seminar looks at girls’ relationships with each other and the adults in their world. How is power used within girl peer groups – who’s in and who’s not? What does bullying look like among girls? We discuss how to help your daughter manage social popularity and social isolation, focusing on preventing depression, anxiety and eating disorders in young girls. Also, how can you support your daughter to be herself – examine what kind of parenting style works in developing a lasting relationship with your daughter.

DATE 22 April
TIME 7pm – 9pm
LOCATION Our Lady Star of the Sea School, Ocean Grove (Melways Map 234 F4)

DATE 7 May
TIME 7pm – 9pm
LOCATION St Josephs School, Malvern (Melways Map 59 C8)

DATE 30 May
TIME 7pm – 9pm
LOCATION Catholic Regional College, North Keilor (Melways Map 14 B1)

DATE 5 June
TIME 7pm – 9pm
LOCATION Our Lady Help of Christians School, Eltham (Melways Map 21 K5)

THE SECRETS OF HAPPY, CREATIVE, CONFIDENT AND COMPETENT KIDS
PRESENTER: Andrew Fuller
AGES: Primary and Secondary

The genius in children often becomes hidden by a fear of making mistakes, anxieties, perfectionism or low motivation. Many bright children under-perform and do poorly at school. Others do well at school but may not live up to expectations once they leave. Topics to support children to be confident will include:
• Building concentration and memory power
• Creative problem solving and ingenuity
• Planning and anticipation skills
• Sequencing and listening skills
• Increasing motivation and pleasure in learning
• Building self-esteem and dealing with set backs
• Developing a mindset for success.

DATE 5 August
TIME 7pm – 9pm
LOCATION St Francis of Assisi School, Tarneit (Melways Map 202 H 5)

DATE 14 October
TIME 7pm – 9pm
LOCATION St Mary’s School, East St Kilda (Melways Map 2P K4)

BUILDING RESILIENCE IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS
PRESENTER: Chris Daicos
AGES: Primary and Secondary

Young people in our schools today need the skills, knowledge and practical opportunities to build social relationships to cope with difficulty and to work collaboratively. Resilient children are socially competent, can solve problems, have a sense
of autonomy and independence, and a sense of purpose and future. As a consequence, these children have an increased capacity to learn.

This seminar will:

- provide an overview of the recent research in the area of resilience
- examine the profile of the resilient child and the protective factors that enhance these qualities
- provide an opportunity to identify and associate current work/parenting with protective factors
- explore ways of increasing and maximising these protective factors for children and adolescents.

**DATE** 1 May
**TIME** 7pm– 9pm
**LOCATION** St James College, East Bentleigh (Melways Map 78 B3)

**DATE** 12 June
**TIME** 7pm– 9pm
**LOCATION** Christ the King School, Braybrook (Melways Map 41 E1)

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**HOW TO STAY IN TOUCH ON THE ADOLESCENT ROLLER COASTER**

**Presenter:** Bill Jennings
**Age:** Secondary

Whether you are already living in the ‘teenage laboratory’ or you’re in the queue for the ride alongside your child on the adolescent rollercoaster, this seminar will provide:

- the opportunity to practise a skill that will help keep communication strong whether your child is an adolescent now, or will be one day
- the knowledge for each parent role: mother–son; father–son; mother–daughter and father–daughter
- young people’s words and insights
- key ingredients (from Bill’s research) to assist your child in a healthy transition to young adulthood
- practical material to readily begin the practice of strengthening communication with your child.

**DATE** 3 June
**TIME** 7pm – 9pm
**LOCATION** Emmaus College, Vermont South (Melways Map 62 E5)

**DATE** 20 August
**TIME** 7pm – 9pm
**LOCATION** Kilbreda College, Mentone (Melways Map 87 A7)

**DATE** 3 September
**TIME** 7pm – 9pm
**LOCATION** Thomas Carr College, Tarneit (Melways Map 202 H5)

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**A FOR ATTITUDE TO POSITIVE PARENTING**

**PRESENTER:** Julie Davey
**AGES:** Primary and Secondary

Julie Davey presents proven strategies to build resilience in children and enhance wellbeing for the whole family. Topics will cover:

- Positive attitudes for Health and Happiness, including:
  - tips and techniques to reduce stress and anxiety in children
  - improving personal performance, health & success for yourself and your child.
- The Fabulous First 5 Minutes Program, including:
  - teaching children how to deal with problems as opportunities
  - the importance of setting achievable goals and reaching their full potential
  - building confidence in children and helping them focus in class.
- Food for Thought provides fun ways to:
  - convince your child to eat nutritious foods
  - focus on their positive traits and potential
  - become more resilient.

**DATE** 23 April
**TIME** 7pm – 9pm
**LOCATION** St Michael’s School, Ashburton (Melways Map 60 E10)

**DATE** 17 September
**TIME** 7pm – 9pm
**LOCATION** St Lawrence School, Derrimut (Melways Map 39 B3)

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**DAUGHTERS AND DADS**

**Presenter:** Bill Jennings
**Age:** Secondary

This seminar focuses on the transition for girls as they enter secondary school and their teenage years. Dads will appreciate this opportunity to share their experiences in raising daughters and consider the values and parenting behaviours that represent males as positive role models.

**DATE** 5 September
**TIME** 7pm – 9pm
**LOCATION** Ava Maria College, Aberfeldie (Melways Map 28 C4)

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**New Parent Seminar Series Coordinator**

The Parent Seminar Series has a new Coordinator, following the retirement last year of Shirley O’Sullivan. The new coordinator is Doug Sandiford, who was previously a classroom and Physical Education teacher in government primary schools. He has supported schools across all sectors, delivering sport, health and wellbeing programs. Mr Sandiford was Co-ordinator of the state-wide AUSSIE SPORT Program and a volunteer coordinator for the 2005 Pacific School Games. Mr Sandiford can be contacted at the Catholic Education Office Melbourne on 9267 0228 or dsandiford@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au.

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To register and for further details contact the Parent Seminar Series Coordinator, Doug Sandiford, at the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) on 9267 0228, or dsandiford@ceomelb.catholic.edu.au.

All seminars cost $10 per person, payable in advance.
Celebrating Lent and Easter

The mass consumerism that tends to envelop Christmas seems set to sweep through Easter as well. This year, Lent is early but not so early that Easter eggs and chocolate bunnies should be available so soon after Christmas.

Most people are aghast when brightly coloured Easter eggs, hot cross buns and chocolate bunnies appear on supermarket shelves early in the New Year. But all is not lost! One Catholic parent recently heard her seven-year-old daughter exclaim, ‘Christmas has just finished and we haven’t even begun to prepare for Easter yet!’ This enlightened statement showed she understood that there was a period of preparation: the season of Lent which precedes the celebration of Easter.

Lent, a time for reflecting on our lives, for refocusing on God’s love for us, and God’s call to love and serve others, began with Ash Wednesday on 13 February. Lent is a time for renewal through prayer, fasting and giving, as we prepare ourselves to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus at Easter – the most important feast in the Church’s calendar.

Lent provides an opportunity for parents to share with our children the importance of prayer and giving. Rather than thinking about ourselves, we should consider how we might help those in need.

The culmination of our prayerful preparation is Easter. Easter is a time to celebrate Christ’s Resurrection – a new life, a new beginning and hope for the future. The cross was a well-known symbol long before the time of Christ but when Jesus was crucified, the crucifix (Jesus on the Cross) became a symbol of His suffering and love for us all. With the resurrection of Jesus, the cross was seen as a symbol of His victory over death and an opportunity for everlasting life.

It is important that Easter be a time of joyful celebration of life and not just an occasion to indulge in chocolate eggs. Here are some suggestions for praying and celebrating as a family during Lent and Easter.

LENTEN ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES

- Let your children light a candle after Mass and pray for people throughout the world who are sick, hungry or in danger.
- Walk the Stations of the Cross at your parish church on Good Friday and be taken on a visual, physical and spiritual journey as you pray, sing and reflect.
- A Good Friday tradition for the family is to make and eat hot cross buns together. Discuss the symbolism of the cross on the bun with your children.

EASTER ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES

- Visit your local library and borrow picture books of the Easter story, to help your children to understand Jesus’ death and resurrection. Picture books of the Easter story also make beautiful Easter gifts for children.
- Colouring hard-boiled eggs for Easter is a wonderful family tradition and a lot of fun to do with your children. For a variety of Easter Egg activities to share with your children please visit DLTK’s Crafts for Kids www.dltk-holidays.com/easter/dye.htm
- While we usually think of Christmas for gift-giving, Easter has a richer heritage for giving. God gave His Son. Jesus gave his life. Find ways in which you and your family can give to others unconditionally. Extend God’s love to others by visiting the sick and elderly, gathering up clothing to take to a homeless shelter, or making and delivering food baskets to families in need.
I was inspired to become a teacher by the examples that my teachers set for me. I can’t think of a more important job to be doing than this.

Daniel Buttacavoli with Federal Schools’ Minister, Peter Garrett and above, teaching in the classroom. Photo courtesy the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership.

Melbourne Catholic school teacher, Daniel Buttacavoli, who won the Australian Secondary Teacher of the Year Award, said his win was a ‘reflection’ of the work of all the teachers at his school.

Mr Buttacavoli, head of English at Emmanuel College, Altona North, defeated all other state and territory finalists to win the award, which was recently announced by Federal Schools Minister, Peter Garrett.

‘It was an honour to be nominated by my school, considering all of the talented people I work with,’ said Mr Buttacavoli. ‘To have actually won is still sinking in – it’s great to know that what we’re doing is on the right path and I’m looking forward to the experiences that will come with the award this year.’

‘I think the reward is a positive reflection on the work we do at Emmanuel College. We have a clear focus on improving student outcomes and this recognises the journey that all of my colleagues have undertaken. My students have reacted very positively to the award. It’s definitely raised expectations; I hope I can live up to them!’

Mr Buttacavoli said teaching as a career had long been on his radar. ‘I was inspired to become a teacher by the examples that my teachers set for me. I can’t think of a more important job to be doing than this – and the best moments in my teaching career have been when my students have said that I have inspired them to take up teaching.’

As a result of his win, Mr Buttacavoli will soon embark on a four week sabbatical in the professional learning area of his choice, valued at up to $25,000. ‘Emmanuel College is investigating project-based learning, a methodology that has come out of the United States in the last decade or so. It’s one aspect of the whole idea of the 21st century classroom, something I’m interested in looking at closely,’ he said.

‘Who is doing it well, what challenges have they overcome, where did it all go wrong and what can we learn from them, too? I hope this will help my school implement project-based learning more successfully, but I also hope it will give me an insight to the process of change in schools more generally.’

The 2012 Australian Awards for Outstanding Teaching and School Leadership are organised by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) on behalf of the Australian Government.

Kathy Green from St Francis Xavier School, Montmorency was nominated for Australian Primary Teacher of the Year; and Peter White, Notre Dame College (Sandhurst diocese), was a finalist for the Australian Secondary Principal of the Year.
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Jack of all trades

Jack Hayes, one of the recipients of the Father Wall Bursary Awards said he felt a sense of disbelief when he learned of his nomination. Jack, a Year 11 student at St Joseph’s College, Newtown, was one of four students to be nominated for the award, which recognises leadership potential in young people. ‘I felt a mixture of surprise, disbelief and also pride that the school thought me worthy of nomination’, said Jack, who organises community service programs in association with St Francis Xavier School, Corio, and works hard to raise money for St Joseph’s sister school in Uganda. Other award recipients were Renee Demeo from Sacred Heart College, Geelong; Jessica Suares, Sacré Coeur, Glen Iris; and Emmie Guy from Mount Lilydale Mercy College, Lilydale. Renee is involved in teaching children’s liturgy in her local parish and has a strong commitment to serving others. Jessica is a leader in several fields at Sacré Coeur, including debating while Emmie is class captain and was an ambassador for the Catholic Youth Festival in 2012. Each student has received a $3000 bursary to assist with school fees and other expenses. The bursary was established in recognition of Father James Wall, a spirited leader who established the Catholic Development Fund in the 1950s.

Bus appeal launch

St Paul’s College in Kew, which educates students with intellectual and physical disabilities needs urgent funding to keep its specialist bus service on the road. The Catholic school, which is run by Villa Maria, has organised a chaperoned bus service to and from school for the past 10 years. In December, 2011, St Paul’s launched its ‘Save me a Seat’ appeal, aimed at raising $200,000 to keep the bus service operational. St Paul’s student, Anthony, spends three days a week at the school. Anthony’s mother, Angela Bonato, said the bus service was a lifesaver. ‘Without the bus run I would have to invest in a taxi or pay someone privately to take him,’ said Ms Bonato. ‘For me, the two days Anthony attends mainstream school and I have to transport him, are a real struggle.’ St Paul’s principal, Cheril Dewhirst, said only 35 per cent of students could currently be accommodated on the buses. ‘Many other families are struggling on waiting lists,’ said Ms Dewhirst. Meanwhile, St Paul’s has successfully raised more than $60,000 for a new playground for its students. Donation to maintain the bus service can be made by contacting 9855 7600 or visiting www.villamaria.com.au/support-us/donations.

What flutters by

It may not be as big as the butterfly atrium at Melbourne Zoo but the school community at St Joseph’s School in Hawthorn believes its butterfly enclosure is just as impressive. The new enclosure which is currently home to the common eggfly butterfly (Hypolimnas bolina), was recently opened by the Victorian Minister for Education, Martin Dixon, who was a teacher at St Joseph’s in a former life. Science teacher Mary Howard said Melbourne Zoo butterfly expert, Norman Dowsett, provided advice to the school when it established the atrium. ‘St Joseph’s was attempting to provide a stimulating and engaging environment for all learning styles,’ Ms Howard said. ‘In establishing a butterfly atrium and in creating a garden for experiencing, questioning and observation we are endeavouring to raise awareness of the importance of the environment in science studies. ’ Students are using their scientific skills of observation, problem solving and investigation to ensure that the butterflies have a habitat that is conducive to the life cycle of a butterfly.’ She said students had to face a myriad of problems. ‘How can we stop the ants eating the cocoons? How are the mice entering the atrium and how can we better control the temperature?,’ said Ms Howard.
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THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT’S PROPOSALS FOR SCHOOL FUNDING
The Australian Government is planning to introduce a new way of funding schools, which is expected to cost all levels of government an additional $6.5 billion.

A per student amount, based on the cost of educating children in high-performing schools, will go to schools. Students in Catholic schools will only receive part of this funding, based on the capacity of their parents to pay fees, in a measure similar to the existing Socioeconomic Status (SES) model.

There will be equal loadings for students with disability or other special needs, and children from low income families, regardless of the school they attend.

The Prime Minister and federal Minister for Education have promised that no school will lose a dollar under the new arrangements.

The Australian Government has also promoted a series of aspirations through a National Plan for School Improvement. The plan consists of 21 separate elements, including higher university entrance standards for prospective teachers, additional teacher and principal training, and more school reporting requirements.

It is proposed that funding and other arrangements are phased in over six years.

The government has set a goal to have Australia ranked amongst the top five countries in the world in reading, science and mathematics by 2025.

The Australian Government is currently negotiating with Catholic schools and state governments. While our negotiations are ongoing, the Australian Government hopes to have an agreement with the state governments to provide funding for the new model by the end of April.

This would allow for legislation on the new funding model to be debated and passed through parliament before the federal election on 14 September 2013.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION’S POSITION ON THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT’S PROPOSALS
Our position on funding remains unchanged.

While the Australian Government’s commitment to equal funding for students with disability and special needs is welcomed, details about the rest of the Australian Government’s reform plans are still limited. The funding Catholic students will receive under any future funding model remains unclear.

If government funding to Catholic schools is frozen, or fails to keep pace with funding to government schools, Catholic schools will be forced to increase parent fees. The Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) is currently negotiating with the Australian Government to make sure any change in funding arrangements has a limited impact on your fees.

Throughout the year, the CEOM will update parents through their schools on a regular basis.
Catholic Education – serving 200,000 Victorian students ... and growing

A Catholic education develops engaged, purposeful and successful young people who shape the world for the common good.

While funding for Catholic school students is 20% lower than government schools, our students are still able to excel academically, physically, emotionally, spiritually and socially.

Fair funding for Catholic school means closing the funding gap between Catholic and Government schools and keeping pressure off the fees you pay.